

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Tuesday, September 26, 2000

The House met at 9 a.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 4864. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to reaffirm and clarify the duty of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to assist claimants for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 2796. An act to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, to authorize the Secretary of the Army to construct various projects for improvements to rivers and harbors of the United States, and for other purposes.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 25 minutes, and each Member except the majority leader, the minority leader or the minority whip limited to not to exceed 5 minutes, but in no event shall continue beyond 9:50 a.m.

CONTROLLING GUN VIOLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITIES

The SPEAKER. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, my goal in Congress has been to make the Federal Government a better partner, working with people back home to make our communities more livable, our families safer, healthier, and more economically secure. An important step towards that goal would be to reduce the threat of gun violence in our communities.

In no developed country in the world are families at greater risk of gun violence than in the United States. Why is this? I think that one of the problems is that the sheer magnitude and ter-

rible frequency of gun violence has numbed the American public. It is hard to grasp the enormity of more than 12 children a day killed, the equivalent of a Columbine High School massacre just scattered around the country.

Part of our task must be to put a human face on those tragedies and then to propose simple, common sense steps to reduce gun violence.

My first experience with this tragedy involved a high school friend. Bob Boothman was one of five kids. He was sandwiched between two older twin sisters and two younger twins, a brother and a sister, a couple of years younger. The Boothman family was a place where people gravitated. It was warm and loving, lots of activity, friendly, full of life.

Then, one night in the fall of 1969, as Bob was driving home, things were turned upside down for that family. Someone in a car driving in the other direction fired a random shot that killed Bob. Bob, the student body officer, the boyfriend, the son, the brother, the trusted employee.

Life did go on for the Boothman family, their children, and today, their grandchildren. Yet, nothing quite filled the void of having lost this terrific young man. It was not just Bob that was the victim, but his parents, sisters, brother, friends. They were all victims of that violence, changing their lives forever.

Mr. Speaker, I share this painful memory not because we should dwell on these losses, but because they should inspire us to take steps to protect families in the future.

About the time that Bob lost his life, America declared war on drunk driving and death on our highways. Our battle for highway safety was enormously successful. We have cut the fatality rate in half by a series of simple common sense reforms. So too, we can launch a similar effort to protect Americans against gun violence. We can take simple, common sense steps, keeping guns out of the hands of more people with a pattern of reckless and dangerous behavior, treating the gun like the dangerous product that it is, making it harder for children to obtain and use them, cutting down on illegal sales and distribution.

Sadly, this Congress has been paralyzed by extremists on the issue of gun violence, and the Republican leadership has refused to even allow the conference committee on the Juvenile Justice bill to meet for 14 months to consider the Senate-approved gun amend-

ments. They have not met since August of last year.

Luckily, in my State of Oregon, in November, we can vote for Measure 5, which would close the gun show loophole, a small, but significant step to make sure that all gun purchasers are subjected to background checks, to maybe help break the log jam here in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, Bob Boothman died on a cold November night in 1969. Since then, over 1 million Americans have lost their lives to gun violence, more than all of the Americans who have been killed in gun violence in war from the Civil War to this date. We as a Nation have celebrated the sacrifice of those million war dead; and we have worked to minimize, to prevent future conflicts and loss of life. So too, we need to memorialize the victims of gun violence, to make sure that their lives were not lost in vain, so that all of America's families can be safer, healthier, and more economically secure.

THREAT OF TUBERCULOSIS SPREADING RAPIDLY WORLDWIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BALLENGER). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the threat of tuberculosis is spreading rapidly throughout the developing world. TB is the greatest infectious killer of adults worldwide, and it is the biggest killer of young women. More people died from tuberculosis last year around the world than any year in history. It kills 2 million people per year, one person every 15 seconds.

Not surprisingly, the statistics on access to TB treatment worldwide are pretty grim. Fewer than one in five of those with tuberculosis are receiving appropriate treatment, something called Directly Observed Treatment, Short Course. Based on World Bank estimates, DOTS treatment is one of the most cost-effective health interventions available, costing as little as \$20 in developing countries to save a life and producing cure rates of up to 90 to 95 percent, even in the poorest countries.

We have a very small window of opportunity during which stopping TB would be very cost effective. If we wait, if we go too slowly, more strains of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, so-

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

called MDR-TB, will emerge. It will cost billions to control with no guarantee of success. Multidrug-resistant TB has been identified on every continent. According to the World Health Organization, MDR-TB ultimately threatens to return TB control to the pre-antibiotic era, which older people in this country are familiar with, where no cure for TB was available. In the U.S., TB treatment, normally about \$2,000 per patient, skyrockets to \$200,000 to \$250,000 per patient when that patient is infected with MDR-TB, and treatment then may not even be successful.

The Prime Minister of India visited the United States recently and spoke in this Chamber. During his trip, he and I discussed the growing threat of tuberculosis and other infectious diseases in South Asia. India has more TB cases than anywhere else in the world. Each day, 1,200 Indians die of tuberculosis. The disease has become a very major barrier to social and economic development, costing the Indian economy an estimated \$2 billion a year. Mr. Speaker, 300,000 children are forced to leave school each year because their parents have tuberculosis. More than 100,000 women with TB are rejected by their families, due to the social stigma attached to it.

A recent World Health Organization study in India found that in areas where effective tuberculosis treatment was implemented, the TB death rate fell 85 percent. India has undertaken an aggressive campaign to control tuberculosis, and they need the world's help. TB experts estimate it will cost an additional \$1 billion each year worldwide to control this disease. In the Foreign Operations appropriations bill, international tuberculosis control efforts have been allocated bipartisanship, \$60 million towards that \$1 billion world effort. This is a significant improvement from last year where TB control received \$35 million, and 3 years ago, when there was no money provided to TB at all.

Gro Bruntland, the general director of the World Health Organization, said tuberculosis is not a medical issue, it is a political issue. Getting Americans engaged in an international medical issue like tuberculosis, even when addressing that issue serves our international humanitarian interests and our domestic practical interests, is an uphill battle. We have an opportunity in this country and in this Chamber to save millions of lives now and prevent millions of needless deaths in the future.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GOODLING) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I take this time because today, we may have 40 minutes of a lot of to-do about nothing, because there are those who believe that the sky is falling on the Violence Against Women's Act. I want to read into the RECORD a letter that I sent to the Washington Post after one of their articles.

DEAR EDITOR: It would be inaccurate for your readers to conclude that the Committee on Education and the Workforce is holding up reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. There are three committees with jurisdiction; one of those is the Committee on Education and the Workforce. We have jurisdiction over several components of VAWA, one of which we just reauthorized last year, Runaway and Homeless Youth, which was signed into law on October 12, 1999. There is no need to deal with a program reauthorized that recently, since there has hardly been enough time to determine if further changes in the program are needed.

We also have jurisdiction over the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act, another component of VAWA, as well as the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, which my committee plans to reauthorize together next year, as we always have. This tandem reauthorization has occurred ever since 1988.

Mr. Speaker, we have grants that go to battered women's shelters and services and the National Domestic Violence Hotline. I want to make it very clear that we have had increases of 24 percent in the Battered Women's Shelters and Services, and we have had a 40 percent increase in the National Domestic Violence Hotline as far as funding is concerned since 1998.

I was an original cosponsor of FVPSA in 1984, and I have a long history of support for the programs. The programs are already funded for next year in the appropriation process as it goes through the different Chambers, well above the amount that they are funded for this year. So again, these programs will continue, these programs will continue at a higher expenditure than they have in the past; and, as I indicated, I am very proud that we have had a 24 percent and a 40 percent increase in two of those programs since 1998.

The sky is not falling on the Violence Against Women Act. The sky is even going higher and clearer without the necessity to do anything else at this particular time.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, in June this Congress approved the first substantive reform of our campaign finance laws since 1979. The bipartisan vote for approval followed months of discussion of the perverse impact on

our democracy of clandestine political organizations organized under section 527 of the Internal Revenue Code.

While this was a small victory among many defeats on the campaign finance reform front, it was nevertheless significant. The path to progress, however, was a twisted path. Final approval followed repeated rejection of bipartisan reform proposals in the House Committee on Ways and Means. Finally, after months of delay, the House Republican leadership reversed course and brought up a 527 bill for our consideration here in the House, late at night, with no amendments permitted and very truncated debate.

During previous Committee on Ways and Means consideration on this matter, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. COYNE) and I had offered a more comprehensive alternative. Unfortunately, the provisions of this alternative were omitted from the final bill during the belated scrambling for immediate floor consideration. Now, many State and local officials are paying the price for this mistake with unnecessary time and effort in completing unnecessary filings here in Washington that duplicate those they were already making on the State level.

Mr. Speaker, I have just introduced legislation with a number of our colleagues to correct this error. This new bill will address the concerns of the State and local officials and organizations, it will apply the gift tax as an added element of deterrence for undisclosed contributions as we previously proposed, and it will make other necessary technical corrections of errors that were committed in the course of rushing the previous bill to the floor late one night.

Mr. Speaker, while the problem of having the State and local committees make duplicative filings certainly did not have a bipartisan origin, it does demand a bipartisan solution. As with the original 527 bill that I first presented in March, I seek support of both Republican and Democratic colleagues to correct what one group has called "the senseless duplication of efforts on the part of many State and local" organizations forced to fill out forms and send them to the Internal Revenue Service, even if they have already made substantially the same public disclosure to State regulatory agencies.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will provide an exemption for those State and local groups that are meeting substantially the same public disclosure requirements as now apply to Federal 527 organizations. Simply, exempting the committees without requiring them to be "substantially similar" could create an unwise loophole in the modest bill that Congress has approved, but doing it as we propose and as we proposed in our previous legislation in the Committee on Ways and Means will reduce